

Patent Claims

1. Method of cleaning valves or lines through which hydrolysable polymers are transported at the operating temperature and which after the polymer stream has been shut off and the polymer has been evacuated as far as possible, steam is passed through the valves or lines to be cleaned while the operating temperature is maintained at plus/minus 10°C, with the steam being introduced via hydrolysis valves set in the wall of the valve housing or the lines and discharged via emptying apertures, characterised in that
the hydrolysis valve (10) consists of a heated housing (17), which is designed as a guide cylinder and has a side steam supply line (15), and a valve piston (18), which can be moved in the axial direction in the guide cylinder and has a valve block (19), which, in the closed position, engages into a valve seat (24) which has an elongated opening cone (22) and is set in the wall of the housing of the valve or line to be cleaned, and a valve block headpiece (20), which, in the closed valve position, terminates flush with the inside surface of the wall of the housing of the valve or line to be cleaned.
2. Method according to Claim 1, characterised in that the supplied steam has a pressure of from 1 to 2 bar absolute.
3. Method according to Claim 1 or 2, characterised in that the amount of steam is just sufficiently large that the valves or lines to be cleaned are not cooled and at the same time the hydrolysis is maintained.
4. Method according to one of Claims 1 to 3, characterised in that the steam is passed through the valves or lines until the condensate of the steam exiting at the emptying apertures is free from hydrolytic degradation products of the polymer.